SYNOPSIS

WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WORK SATISFACTION AND WORK PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN COMMERCIAL DRIVERS FROM ROAD TRANSPORT SECTOR

R C BANUMATHI

(21PHCOF005)

Supervisor

Dr. D. VENNILA

Associate Professor

Department of Commerce

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Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women,

Coimbatore - 641043

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Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) is an important topic in human resource management, focusing on how individuals navigate their professional responsibilities and personal life commitments. Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the equilibrium between personal life and professional responsibilities, allowing individuals to manage both effectively without excessive stress or strain. It is essential for maintaining mental and physical health, reducing burnout, and enhancing overall well-being (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work satisfaction refers to the degree of pleasure or happiness that an individual feels in their work. This can be influenced by various factors, such as the nature of the work itself, the work environment, culture, and the relationships with their co-workers. It is associated with increased potential for high performance, as people experiencing positive emotions have better resources for performance. Women in male-dominated professions, such as commercial driving, construction work etc. often encounter additional challenges like gender bias, safety concerns, and limited support networks (Smith & Halford, 2016).

Despite advancements in women's employment, the transportation sector continues to struggle with gender equality. Women often hold low-status, low-paying positions with limited opportunities for advancement (ILO, 2022). Comprehensive policies promoting gender mainstreaming, education, and better working conditions are essential to address these issues. This study investigates the challenges faced by women commercial drivers, including performance development and navigating a male-dominated field, and explores how customer and family support impact WLB, WS, and WP (Manimekalai Kalidasan et al., 2017. Recent trends show a significant increase in women entering traditionally male-predominant fields, challenging traditional gender roles and promoting gender equality (Crain & Stevens, 2018; Singh & Bhowmik, 2020). However, women commercial drivers face unique challenges that affect their WLB, WS, and WP (Galea, Houkes, & De Rijk, 2014). This study addresses the research gap on women's experiences in this sector, particularly in Tamil Nadu, and aims to enhance understanding and inform future policies.

WLB, WS, and WP are interconnected aspects of well-being. WLB refers to the balance between professional responsibilities and personal life, essential for reducing stress and preventing burnout, which in turn improves WS and WP (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). WS

reflects contentment with job roles, responsibilities, and the work environment. High WS is linked to increased motivation, reduced turnover, and better WP (Locke, 1976). WP denotes the effectiveness in performing job responsibilities and is influenced by WS, WLB, and support systems. High WP is associated with a good balance between professional and personal life (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993).

Customer Support (CS) and Family Support (FS) play vital role in enhancing WS and WP. Effective CS involves providing assistance and ensuring client satisfaction, which can improve WS and WP by making employees feel more competent and valued (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). FS, which includes emotional, financial, and practical support from family members, helps alleviate work-related stress and allows women to manage their responsibilities more effectively. This support is essential for improving WLB, WS, and WP (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011) even among the workers from female commercial drivers. These constructs are interlinked, creating a comprehensive framework for understanding women commercial drivers' well-being and performance. Social Exchange Theory (SET) integrates these concepts by highlighting the importance of reciprocal relationships in workplace and home environments. According to SET, the support provided by family and customers influences WLB and WS, which in turn affects WP. Organizations that recognize and nurture these reciprocal exchanges will likely see improved overall satisfaction and performance.Work-life balance (WLB) is a vital aspect of Human Resource Management, particularly for women commercial drivers who face unique challenges due to long hours, irregular schedules, and significant physical and mental stress. This study focuses on women commercial drivers in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, India, examining how gender, occupation, and other socio-economic factors affect the WLB, work satisfaction (WS), and work performance (WP). Further, this commercial driving domine encounters gender bias, safety concerns, and limited support networks. The relevance of this study is emphasized due to the growing female labour force participation in the road transport sector.

Literature Review

The intersection of work-life balance (WLB), job satisfaction, and performance has garnered significant attention across various professions, with recent studies highlighting its critical role in enhancing employee outcomes. WLB is increasingly recognized as essential for managing job stress and fatigue, particularly in high-demand professions like commercial driving. Göktaş and Ayşe (2023) emphasize that effective WLB allows taxi drivers to engage

in social activities and maintain energy, underscoring the importance of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Job satisfaction and performance are deeply interconnected, as evidenced by Mohammad Redy (2023), who found that both compensation and job satisfaction significantly improve employee performance, with notable coefficients indicating their importance. This relationship is further supported by Perengki Susanto et al. (2022), who demonstrated that work-life balance positively impacts job satisfaction and performance, with family-supportive supervisor behaviors enhancing these effects in SMEs.

The challenges faced by women in male-dominated professions, such as commercial driving, are particularly pronounced. Temitope Owolabi (2021) identifies that female commercial driver in Lagos State face significant physical demands and limited engagement in the profession due to family responsibilities. Mustafa R. Khan et al. (2021) reveal that while work-family conflict has a minimal direct effect on safety participation, job satisfaction mediates this relationship, highlighting its role in mitigating the negative impacts of work-family conflicts. Family support is a crucial factor in managing entrepreneurial stress and enhancing well-being, as Feng Xu et al. (2020) found that perceived family support moderates the relationship between stressors and well-being, suggesting its critical role in improving job satisfaction and performance. This is consistent with findings by Rajesh Ranjan (2013), who notes that work-life balance significantly impacts the well-being and productivity of railway drivers in India.

The role of demographic variables in work-life balance has also been explored. Kumari K Thriveni (2012) reveal significant relationships between demographic factors and work-life balance among women employees in Bangalore (International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics). Conversely, Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) discuss how work-life imbalance leads to job dissatisfaction and withdrawal behaviors, emphasizing the need for effective work-life balance strategies. Existing research extensively explores strategies companies use to promote work-life balance (WLB), work satisfaction (WS), and work performance (WP), influencing individual well-being across physical, psychological, and work-related aspects (Gragnano et al., 2020). While there are numerous studies in the US, Europe, and Southeast Asia (Benito-Osorio et al., 2014), research in India, particularly in Coimbatore, is limited. There is a significant gap in understanding WLB and WS among self-employed female commercial drivers, with existing studies being preliminary or introductory. This study bridges this gap by examining the relationships between WLB, WS, and WP among self-employed women drivers in Coimbatore road transport sector. It introduces the novel

elements of Family Support and Customer Support as moderating variables, offering fresh insights into improving the well-being and performance of these drivers.

Need and Relevance of the Study

Traditionally male-predominant, the transportation industry is now seeing more female commercial drivers. Maintaining WLB allows for boosting and returning to work with new energy. Failure to manage both can lead to dissatisfaction and decreased satisfaction, which affects work performance. The transportation industry's demanding nature leads to high stress, impacting physical and mental health. Achieving WLB is essential, as it positively correlates with work performance. This study is particularly relevant in today's climate, where achieving healthy WLB is essential for overall well-being. For self-employed female commercial drivers, navigating this work-life boundary effectively is vital for maintaining social, psychological and physical well-being. The growing number of female drivers in the commercial driving industry emphasizes how important it is to address the challenges the women face, in managing work and personal life. This study aims to investigate the work-life balance (WLB) and its effect on work satisfaction (WS) and work performance (WP) of women commercial drivers. This will encourage more young women to enter into commercial driving.

Statement of the of the Problem

Work-life balance (WLB) remains a significant challenge for Indian working women, particularly when considering the complex demands of balancing personal and professional lives (Gupta & Sharma, 2019). This issue is further enlarged by the growing number of women entering the workforce across various sectors, especially in road transport. Despite strides towards gender equality, achieving a healthy WLB remains elusive for many Indian women. Several factors contribute to this ongoing struggle include long work hours and inflexible schedules**,** limited family support and societal expectations. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing practical solutions to help women achieve better WLB. The transportation sector, crucial to Coimbatore's economic activity, has seen a growing trend of female participation, exemplified by initiatives like the "Pink Bike" campaign. Despite the demanding nature of commercial driving jobs, more women are entering this traditionally male-centric field. This study aims to contribute to the knowledge base on WLB of women commercial drivers and improve the overall quality of life for women in this profession.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the motivational factors of women commercial drivers for selecting driving as a profession.
2. To assess the Work-Life Balance, Work Satisfaction and Work Performance of women commercial drivers in the Road transport sector.
3. To analyze the effect of Work-life balance on Work Satisfaction and Work Performance of women commercial drivers.
4. To evaluate the effect of Work Satisfaction on Work Performance of women commercial drivers in the Road transport sector
5. To analyze the moderating effect of Customer support and Family Support on Work-life balance, Work Satisfaction and Work Performance of women commercial drivers in the Road transport sector.
6. To examine the challenges faced by women commercial drivers.

Hypotheses of the Study

H_a1: There is a positive relationship between Work-life balance and Work Satisfaction of Women Commercial Drivers in the Road Transport Sector.

H_a2: There is a positive relationship between Work-life balance and Work Performance among Women Commercial Drivers in the Road Transport Sector

H_a3: There is a positive relationship between a linear combination of the Work-Life Balance, work satisfaction and Work Performance

H_a4: Work Satisfaction positively influences the Work Performance of Women Commercial Drivers in the Road Transport Sector.

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference exist in the work-life balance, Work Satisfaction and Work Performance among Age, Education, Marital status, Income, and experience variables.

$H_0$2: Family support and Customer support will not strengthen the positive effect between work-life balance and Work Satisfaction

$H_0$3: Family support and Customer support will not strengthen the positive effect between Work Satisfaction and Work Performance.

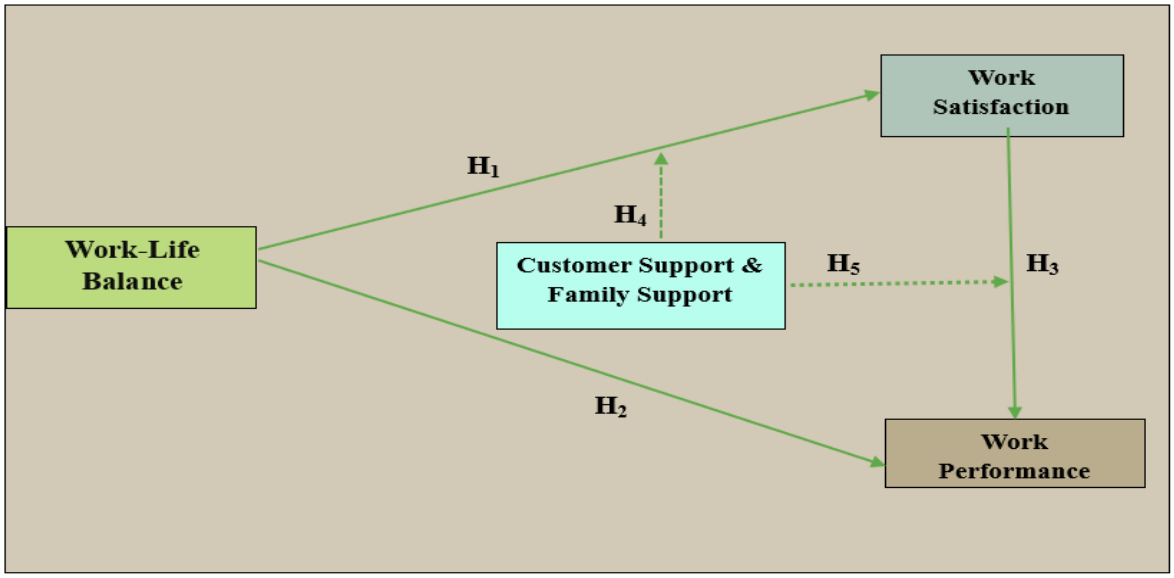
Scope of the Research Work

The study assesses the Work-life balance (WLB), work satisfaction (WS), and work performance (WP) and explores its relationship among self-employed women commercial drivers from the road transport of Coimbatore district. Further, the study analyses how family support and customer support function as moderating effects on WLB, WS and WP. The study gives an insight into the motivational factors of women commercial drivers which will pave the way to other women to enter into this field. Challenges of the women commercial drivers are also addressed in this study which will help the women drivers retain this field. Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute more inclusive and supportive work environment for women from the road transport industry.

Methodology

The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. The locale of the study is Coimbatore District covering South, West, North, and Central zones. Self-employed female commercial drivers from the road transport sector in Coimbatore District are the population of the study. The population size is 213 which forms the sample size since the census method of sampling technique was adopted. Primary Data was used in this study. The Interview schedule method was adopted to collect the required data. The study period covers 6 months starting from September 2022 to March 2023. A pilot study was conducted with 60 respondents to check the study's feasibility and to test the appropriateness of the questions included in the Interview schedule. This study has obtained ethical approval to ensure the protection and welfare of participants throughout the research process. The maximum number of items value is more than 0.7. Hence the reliability of the questions is proved. Statistical tools for data analysis include Garrett Ranking, Weighted Mean score, Correlation, Multiple Regression, Path Analysis, MANOVA, Moderation Analysis PLS (SEM) and Factor Analysis.

The identification of relationships based on the Social Exchange Theory model frames the conceptual model was tested. Additionally, the relationships between Work-Life Balance (WLB), Work Satisfaction (WS), Work Performance (WP), and the moderating effects of Customer Support (CS) and Family Support (FS) have been explained, and theories have been constructed accordingly.



(Susanto P, Hoque ME, Jannat T,Emely B, Zona MA and Islam MA(2022) *Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance of SMEs Employees: The Moderating Role of Family-Supportive Supervisor Behaviors*.)

Figure 1 The Study's Conceptual Framework

Summary of Findings

The following is the summary of the important findings of the study:

- Firstly, women choose to become commercial drivers primarily for better financial income, personal passion, and challenging work nature. Influences from other drivers and flexible working hours also significantly contribute to their motivation. Factors such as minimal educational requirements and ease of entry are less influential, while the tradition of a family profession is the least motivating.
- Many respondents feel their personal Life Interference with Work. The majority of the respondents are satisfied with the various attributes of work satisfaction. However, challenges such as high workload, long hours, and difficulty in balancing work with personal responsibilities emerge as significant concerns impacting overall satisfaction.
- Concerning the assessment of work performance, a conscientious effort by women commercial drivers comprises maintaining safety, complying with transport regulations, and lower accidents and improved customer service.
- There is a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and work satisfaction, indicating that a better balance between work and personal life enhances work satisfaction.

- The study revealed that improved work-life balance is linked to better work performance, underscoring its importance in the commercial driving sector.
- The study found significant differences in work-life balance and satisfaction across various demographic factors, although marital status and income did not show significant effects.
- These findings highlighted that Work Satisfaction significantly enhances Work Performance.
- The study found that customer and family support impact between work-life balance and work satisfaction and work satisfaction and work performance.
- The study reveals a wide range of challenges faced by women commercial drivers such as workplace issues, lack of family support, personal health, lack of customer support, balancing responsibilities, and poor support from male drivers. Each factor significantly contributes to the overall variance, indicating the need for comprehensive support strategies to address these multifaceted challenges and improve the well-being and work performance of women commercial drivers.
- Overall, the findings highlight the significant role of work-life balance in enhancing work satisfaction and performance among women commercial drivers.

Limitations

The following are the limitations of the study:

- The study's sample size of self-employed women commercial drivers in the Coimbatore District is small, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions.
- The study doesn't cover the scope of cause-and-effect relationship of variables which is applicable in longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies.

Scope for Future Research

Comparative studies between self-employed women and those employed by companies could reveal differences in job satisfaction, performance, and work-life balance. Expanding research to include diverse demographics will help identify unique factors influencing their experiences and highlight regional or cultural variations. Investigating the impact of technological advancements and evaluating specific interventions, such as flexible working hours and childcare support, will be useful in understanding their effectiveness. Finally, Stress and anxiety are crucial factors to consider when examining the relationship between work-life

balance (WLB) and job performance. Employees often experience stress and anxiety regarding their professional and personal development, particularly in Road Transport. These psychological factors can significantly impact the effectiveness of WLB on job performance.

Original Contribution

The original contribution of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of the interplay between work-life balance, work satisfaction, and work performance specifically among women commercial drivers in the Coimbatore District. By focusing on this underrepresented demographic within the transport sector, the research provides valuable insights into the unique challenges and motivational factors that influence their professional experiences. The study extends existing literature by highlighting the significant role of income levels and demographic variations in shaping work satisfaction and performance outcomes.

Furthermore, the research offers practical and theoretical recommendations for government, organizations advocating for targeted interventions such as flexible working hours, childcare support, and equitable compensation. These contributions not only inform strategies to enhance the well-being and effectiveness of women commercial drivers but also promote gender diversity and inclusivity in a traditionally male-dominated field. Overall, this study fills a critical gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence and actionable insights that can guide future research and policy initiatives aimed at improving the work experiences of women in the commercial driving sector.

Conclusion

This study explores the impact of work-life balance on work satisfaction and work performance among women commercial drivers in Coimbatore district. It identifies key motivations, such as better income, passion for driving, and job flexibility, while noting that minimal educational requirements are secondary factors. The study aligns with Social Exchange Theory (SET), demonstrating that work-life balance and work satisfaction positively impact work performance among women commercial drivers. These findings support SET's focus on reciprocity and mutual benefit in relationships. Improved work satisfaction and work-life balance are associated with better performance, explaining about 9.05% of the variance in work performance. This underscores the importance of these factors in enhancing outcomes for women in this sector. The research reveals a moderate positive link between work-life balance and work satisfaction, indicating that balancing professional and personal life enhances

satisfaction among women commercial drivers. It also shows a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and work performance, highlighting the importance of balanced work dynamics. The study finds that income levels strongly influence both satisfaction and performance. Therefore, improving work-life balance, increasing financial incentives, and addressing income disparities are considered important for enhancing performance and supporting women drivers. Policymakers should use these insights to support women commercial drivers.

Paper Publications

- Banumathi, R., & Vennila, D. (2023). Role of Women in Commercial Driving – A Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) Approach. SDMIMD Journal of Management, 14(1), 67–78. https://doi.org/10.18311/sdmimd/2023/32952 - (UGC-CARE - 1)
- Banumathi, R., & Vennila, D. (2024) Discrimination Based on Gender & How It Affects Employee Performance. NMIMS Management Review, Vol 32, Issue 1 - Web of Science - **Accepted**
- Banumathi, R., & Vennila, D. (2024) Employee Engagement and Performance: The Impact of Job Satisfaction and Organisational Communication. International Journal of Business Competition and Growth, (UGC-CARE - 1) journal - **Accepted**

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